Appendix F: Methodology

Overview

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) receives from the U.S. Census Bureau a special tabulation of decennial census data that are largely not available through standard Census products. These "special tabulation" data are used by local governments for housing planning as part of the Consolidated Planning process. HUD also uses some of these data in allocation formulas for distributing funds to local jurisdictions. These data, which are available to HUD grantees and the general public at http://www.huduser.org/datasets/cp.html, are often referred to as the "CHAS Data". They are comprised of a variety of housing need variables split by HUD defined income limits (30, 50, and 80 percent of median income) and HUD specified household types.

Estimating Housing Needs

The estimate of the Commonwealth's housing needs draws on information from many sources, including the 2000 Census, the 2002 Annual Community Survey, consultation with agencies and organizations that work on issues of housing and homelessness, including those that serve populations with special needs, and testimony from the public.
The housing market analysis lays the groundwork for establishing priorities and developing appropriate strategies

This analysis incorporates data provided by HUD. These are the special tabulations known as the comprehensive housing affordability strategy, or CHAS, data. There are some limitations to the CHAS data, however. Due to rounding, numbers often do not add up to the totals, nor do they match the raw data for the same geographies and categories from the Census SF3 files. Also, the race and ethnicity categories differ somewhat from the standard classifications used by many planning agencies. Nonetheless,

Homeless Needs

Data on the homeless population and homeless in shelters is made available by the MASShelter Data Center at the Center for Social Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston. MASShelter provides access to comprehensive aggregate, unduplicated data available on homeless individuals using Massachusetts emergency shelters. It uses information collected through the statewide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Data are currently available for 2000, 2001, and 2002.

There are several different methodologies for estimating home many people are homeless, and there are advantages and drawbacks to each one. Many studies use *period of prevalence* counts (the number of people who are homeless over a given period), which risks double counting homeless who may be served by more than one facility during the course of a year. Others, such as the Massachusetts annual census of the homeless, are based on a *point in time* (the number of people homeless on a given day), and these tend to undercount the many households who experience episodes of homelessness over the course of a year. The creation of the homeless management information system (HMIS) at UMass has substantially improved the data collection process and the accuracy of information about the homeless population in the state.

Non-Housing Community Development Needs

In identifying and prioritizing the state's non-housing community development needs, economic trends and conditions were analyzed, with particular attention to the impacts on low and moderate income people and communities. Input was received from community representatives and regional planning agencies in a series of focus groups held across the state and in one-on-one interviews, and through a review of recent CDBG funding requests by DHCD staff. Although this section focuses on the Commonwealth's non-housing community development needs, the lack of affordable housing was cited repeatedly in focus groups and interviews, especially in the eastern part of the state, as *the* major barrier to business growth and economic expansion.

Sources are noted throughout the document. Program spending and achievements have been provided by the various administering agencies.